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Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association  
(ERFA) Newsletter

The SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty  
Association

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Spring 2021

## SJSU ERFA News Spring 2021

San Jose State University, Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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SJSU ERFA

# Newsletter

A Newsletter of the San Jose State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

## President's Message

**By Tim Hegstrom**

I was talking to two SJSU colleagues this morning about the “new normal.” One of them wondered whether the university would ever return to in-person classes. It seemed possible to him that the state would see the cost savings in on-line instruction and be unwilling to pay for actual campuses in the future. That dystopian view seemed unlikely to two of us, but it is not the first time that the suggestion has come up in conversation. I have another friend, formerly a CEO of a prominent high-tech firm that builds machines that perform surgery. He has assured me for years that education as we know it will someday be replaced by technology. My response to him is that on-line instruction has been with us for a couple decades now. We understand its advantages as well as its limitations. We know that some students benefit greatly from on-line instruction because it is often the only way they are able to take college courses. We also know from personal experience that the drop-out rate is a lot higher for on-line courses and the SOTE scores are lower.

There are serious limitations to technological substitutes. Being in the presence of another person can help the process of dialogue, the joint problem-solving, that is at the root of so many successful educational outcomes. Technological advances have given the university some great tools that can supplement in-person instruction but are not yet ready to replace it. I suspect a similar thing is true of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association.

We have learned a thing or two about our Association in this pandemic year. For one thing we learned that many out-of-town colleagues are quite willing to join us if they can do it through Zoom. It has been a treat to “see” them again at some of our ERFA programs. In the time since I wrote my most recent column, we have had some excellent ERFA Zoom programs. Professor Jeffrey Benson, Director of the SJSU Choraliers, enlivened us during our holiday “party” with commentary and samples of the Choraliers’ recent performances. Then, a couple weeks ago we were treated to a discussion with columnist Christopher Elliott about how to “Be a Smart Traveler.” That was just what we needed to know as we plan for some post-pandemic travel. The association followed up with some small grants to the Choraliers as well as Elliott’s non-profit organization, and, of course, the SJSU Library, which hosts our retired faculty biographies on ScholarWorks.

In addition to our support for these worthy causes, the ERFA Faculty Awards committee has done its work and has chosen two excellent research projects to fund. The research of Daryl Eggers from Chemistry has applications related to the COVID-19 virus, and Ryan Skinnell from the English Department is taking a close look at Hitler’s rhetoric and related demagoguery. Both of

### *calendar . . .*

**Annual Meeting (via Zoom)**

**DATE: May 14th • TIME: 12:00-1:15 PM**

**SPEAKER: Romey Sabalius**  
**CSU Faculty Trustee**

**Zoom Invitation will be emailed as the  
date approaches**

# President's message . . . (continued)

these projects seem well planned and timely. We will hear a short overview from Professors Eggers and Skinnell at our annual meeting on May 14, which is described elsewhere in this newsletter. Thanks to all of you who made contributions this past year to the Faculty Awards fund through the SJSU Foundation.

The annual meeting will also feature a report from Romey Sabalius from the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Romey is the systemwide faculty delegate to the CSU Board of Trustees. As such, he has special knowledge of key issues facing the CSU, and, by extension, SJSU. In addition, we have some important business to conduct. The Nominations Committee has put together a slate of officer candidates to recommend to the membership, and we have some proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws to consider. These would stipulate that ERFA business can be conducted electronically in emergency situations and would make a slight modification to the duties of the Association's Treasurer. The exact wording is included elsewhere in this newsletter. Please join us for the annual meeting.

While working on this column, I was waiting in the car while my wife, Jacque, went into the El Camino Health Clinic to get her second vaccine jab. The fact that we will all soon have a measure of protection against COVID-19 brought two thoughts to mind. First, sometime in the fall or next spring we will likely have some in-person, but socially-distanced, ERFA outings. This assumes, of course, that the County's COVID metrics suggest we might do so safely. The Program Committee has been discussing possible local venues that will keep risks at a minimum. Secondly, I thought of a kind of unintended benefit that ERFA membership provides. I am referring to the email chains dealing with topics of interest that have recently appeared. We don't want to overuse this feature, but it can be useful in sharing information. Several of you mentioned that the suggestions of colleagues about which "vaccination station" to use and how to get signed up was helpful. There were also positive responses to the question raised about technological and other support retired faculty might expect from the university. We are going to follow up on that one and get back to you.

Envisioning an end to the pandemic in the not too distant future, we have learned to make use of multiple ways to stay in contact. Yes, we

will want to actually meet in-person, but we will also employ the new technologies for as long as they seem useful to all of you.

"See" you soon, and thanks for your continued support of ERFA.

## ***To a Musician Recording "Quartet for the End of Time" on a Violin Recovered from Stalag VII-A\****

***By John Pollock***

**How can you see through your tears  
to read Messiaen's score?**

**How can you bear to hold  
that instrument, knowing the ashes  
among which it was found?**

**How can your heart not break  
into a thousand pieces, each  
crying out, "Why? Why? Why?"**

**And how have those cries  
not deafened you  
forever?**

*\*Note: Olivier Messiaen composed his "Quatuor pour la fin du temps" in the German concentration camp Stalag VII-A. The piece was first performed by his fellow artists imprisoned with him there.*

## *A personal perspective . . .*



Jeffrey Benson, upper right, and the SJSU Concert Choir and the Choraliers.

### **By Lonna Smith**

On Wednesday, December 9, ERFA members were treated to an inspiring and entertaining concert by the SJSU Concert Choir and the Choraliers, directed by Jeffrey Benson and brought to us via a Zoom webinar. Maestro Benson, Director of Choral Activities, also discussed the challenges of teaching and directing performing groups in the virtual world of pandemic education.

For me, the program held much personal significance. Like my colleagues, I was curious to learn how Benson tackled the unenviable challenges of meeting the educational needs of his students. But as a member of a large symphonic choir, I am also a chorister and know firsthand the frustrations of not being able to rehearse as a group or perform for live audiences.

As Dr. Benson explained, there is no possibility for a choir to sing together during the pandemic, and Zoom isn't a solution due to latency issues. If one of his choirs attempted to sing together on Zoom, the result would be a cacophony of sound that would make sense to no one. The only solution is to have each member of the ensemble make a solo recording that will later be blended with the other solo recordings to produce a choral sound.

This daunting task starts with a recording to which the individual choristers sing along. Using a cellphone or another internet-enabled device, the singer listens and sings with the recording via earphones while recording his/her voice on another device. This way, multiple choristers can keep the exact tempo as they

record their separate voices without the recording device picking up any other sounds.

Once this is accomplished, painstaking work begins as the individual recordings are layered, one over another, and blended together into one recording to create the choral sound. Unless the piece is sung *a cappella*, instrumental tracks are also added in the same way.

You might be wondering how all this technology can produce beautiful music that touches souls. The task is immense, but it can be done as was amply shown at our Holiday Concert. Selections ranged from "Ella's Song," composer Bernice Johnson Reagan's tribute to civil rights activist, Ella Baker, to contemporary arrangements of familiar Christmas carols such as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." The result was a treat for both the ears and eyes as charming graphics and the choristers' faces enhanced the music.

Listening to and viewing the student musicians shown in individual boxes on my screen, I was moved to a variety of emotions. Of course, the music so expertly performed elicited great joy. Pride enveloped me while watching their smiling faces that represent the beautiful diversity of our SJSU student body.

But there was poignancy in those moments as well. I couldn't help tearing up at these talented musicians who were denied the experience of standing close to each other, feeling connected as if the choir was one organism, singing together and losing themselves in the beauty. And yet, there they were in their own tiny boxes, their faces glowing with the joy of the music they were creating.



# ERFA Webinar:



## 'BE A SMART TRAVELER'

**By Chris Jochim**

On February 9, 2021, ERFA held a webinar for members featuring the well-known travel advisor and syndicated columnist Christopher Elliott. The entire webinar was a Q&A session in which Elliott dealt with the issues raised by ERFA members. The event began with ERFA President Tim Hegstrom's warm welcome and concluded with his heartfelt thanks and offer of a donation to Elliott Advocacy (ref.: [elliott.org](http://elliott.org)).

In between, Lonna Smith introduced and interviewed our honored presenter. The wonderful array of issues into which the webinar delved was largely due to Lonna's preparation and interviewing skills. When she introduced Chris Elliott, I learned something new—something that was confirmed repeatedly during the course of the interview—which was that Elliott was not just a travel advisor but also a hard-working and effective consumer advocate.

The interview ranged over topics from hotel, air travel, and rental car bookings to travel insurance and travel safety. Did you know that you can sign up with airlines (e.g., to get newsletters) so that you will be informed when there is a drop in prices for flights to your

destinations? And did you know that you may need to use a VPN when shopping for airline tickets in order to avoid a higher price based on your location? This might be true if you have a Palo Alto zip code! Also, Elliott says never give up when an airline or rental car company says "no" to a request for a price adjustment or a refund. Be courteous and perseverant and you may succeed. If not, perhaps Chris Elliott can help.

With regard to rental company practices, in particular, beware of high-pressure efforts to sell you insurance that you may not need. If you are covered by your own insurance carrier, you don't need extra insurance. If you do need extra auto insurance, you are likely to get a better price at [InsureMyRental.com](http://InsureMyRental.com) than at the car rental agency. Finally, if you do have an accident or other problem with your rental car, be careful about accepting the proposed solution, until you are sure it's fully covered. Elliott reported that "loss of use" charges may end up on your bill because it's your fault (supposedly) for putting a rental car temporarily out of commission. This actually happened to Lonna!

# 'SMART TRAVELER' (Continued)

Finally, in consideration of the many successes that Elliott has had in seeking remedies from airlines, hotels, or car rental agencies, Lonna asked him this: "What is your secret." He credited both his willingness to prepare himself well to ask the right questions and his ability to put fear into his interlocutors

due to his writing a nationally syndicated column. Perhaps, at least, you will be able to use the former of these two.

If you want to watch the webinar to see what other lessons can be learned go to [ERFA Webinar with Christopher Elliott.mp4](#).

## *Chat Room...* Special News from and about our members.

This column contains news about travels and activities taken from the membership renewal forms. Members are invited to send news about themselves to Nancie Fimbel at [fimbeln@gmail.com](mailto:fimbeln@gmail.com) or by snail mail at 239 Cypress Point Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043

- **Yudhi Ahuja** (Marketing & Business Analytics, '18) is participating in a conference of the Indian Society of Training and Development in New Delhi in November. Yudhi is a Fellow of the ISTD and a member of its Executive Committee. The theme of the conference is "Strategies for an Agile Work- Culture: Road to New-Age Markets."
- **Nancie Fimbel** (Marketing & Decision Science, '10) and her husband Ed sneaked off for a couple of days of hiking in Death Valley. Mountains, craters, salt flats, sand dunes: it was multiple vacations in one.
- **Larry Gerston** (Political Science, '09) published his fourth children's book *Spencer Spider Meets a Bully* for 3 to 8 year olds. Copies can be purchased by emailing Larry at [lgerston@sjsu.edu](mailto:lgerston@sjsu.edu).
- **Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno** (Nursing, '10), **Marion Yoder** (Nursing, '08), and **Suzanne Malloy** (Nursing, '19) hosted the 3rd Nursing Reunion for Retired Faculty on Zoom on February 18th. Eleven faculty attended and had a very lively, fun conversation. They discussed their vaccine status, future travel plans after the second vaccination, and what they are doing during retirement and while sheltering in place. They received many excellent suggestions for books to read. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3rd at 2 pm on Zoom.
- **Peter Hadreas** (Philosophy, '15) finished his FERP in May 2020 and is now translating Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. He misses teaching, not Zoom teaching, but "the old style with live young humans who, sooner or later, behave so fetchingly human."
- **Susan Kendall** (Library, '18) sings with the Yakima Symphony Chorus, which is hoping to give a concert in the fall. "Serenade to Music" by Ralph Vaughan Williams is currently in rehearsal via Zoom. Susan also belongs to virtual book clubs and a virtual exercise class.
- **Katharine Davies Samway** (Elementary Education, '11) I am working on a small research project, *Teachers' Perspectives on Online Teaching and Learning*, which was inspired by the closing of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and is supported by a CSU-ERFA grant. I am interviewing K-8 teachers who work with non-native English-speaking students and students from low-income homes. These interviews build on interviews I conducted with parents and teachers in spring and fall 2020 for stories published in an East Bay news outlet, *Oakland Voices*.
- **Lonna Smith** (Secondary Ed/LLD, '04) will schedule and host a College of Education Zoom Reunion on March 18.



**By Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno**

The pandemic and intermittent shelter-in-place restrictions have provided my husband and me the opportunity to alter our travel habits, putting safety first. Besides daily walks in our neighborhood, we have explored other areas while visiting the Palo Alto and San Francisco Sutter medical facilities for appointments. California Avenue in Palo Alto is a great place to explore. The San Francisco Marina, including the nearby Palace of Fine Arts, has also become a favorite place to walk. There is an abundance of free and ADA parking, and the views of the Bay and the constantly changing ships traveling under the Golden Gate Bridge offer a pleasant respite. On one occasion, three ships with black sails passed simultaneously under the bridge, offering a unique photo opportunity. The area feels very safe; there are delightful sea breezes and a feeling of freedom with a constantly changing panoply of entertainment. The majority of walkers wear masks. On these walks, you may notice others sitting on a bench or enjoying take-out from a local restaurant.

Across Marina street, the neighborhood around the Palace of Fine Arts has multiple paths so it is easy to avoid other walkers. We started out parking next to the Palace and wandering through the outdoor structures, then proceeded around the adjacent ponds to watch the highly diverse bird life. We then ventured out into the nearby neighborhoods to view the enchanting architecture and landscaping, and came away with some ideas for our outdoor remodel.

As a supplementary point of information, the nearby Balboa Café has fabulous shrimp and grits and a Fresno chicken wrap which can be enjoyed to go or in their well-designed tentlet. Try to reserve a seat in the tent in front of the restaurant to avoid the wind.

Happy Trails to You



# Notice of the ERFA Annual Business Meeting

**By Nancie Fimbel**

At our May business meeting (on Zoom this year), we will vote on the slate of officers for 2021-22 recommended by the Executive Board. For Vice President/President Elect, Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno; for Secretary (two-year term) Celia Bakke; for Member-at-Large (two-year term) Lucy McProud; for Academic Senate Representative (one-year term) Susan McClory.

The Board will also ask you to approve Bill Campsey for Treasurer for one year to fill out the term of Abdel El Shaieb who has retired. Abdel's retirement has provided the occasion for the Board to examine the description of the duties of the Treasurer. We will also ask you, therefore, to vote on a change in the Bylaws to include "the filing of tax forms" to the Treasurer's duties. If approved, **Article III, Section 4** will read: *The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of dues and assessments, the payment of approved Association bills, the filing of tax forms, and the custody of the Association's funds. He/she shall be responsible for preparing and presenting to the Executive Board an annual financial report including a proposed budget.*

With our move to meetings via technology this year, we also will ask the membership to consider several small changes to our Bylaws that enable the Executive Board to proceed without disruption even when face-to-face meetings are impossible. These changes were brought to the Board by an Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee and approved unanimously by the Board at its Oct. 2020 meeting. Additions are underlined.

**Proposed Amendment to Article V.** Add a Section 5, which would read as follows: Except for the election of officers and amending the Constitution or Bylaws, the Executive Board is authorized to act on behalf of the Association during interim periods between Annual Meetings of the Association.

**Proposed Amendment to Article VI, Section I.**

One meeting each year shall be designated as the annual business meeting of the

## SJSU ERFA Executive Board

**2020-21**

### Elected Officers

**President** — Tim Hegstrom

**Vice Pres.** — Jackie Snell

**Secretary** — Celia Bakke

**Treasurer** — Bill Campsey

### **Members at Large**

Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

Lucy McProud

Beth Von Till

### **Academic Senate**

Susan McClory

### **Past President**

Chris Jochim

### Ex Officio Members

#### **Membership**

Joan Merdinger, Beth Von Till,

Stephen Branz

#### **Consulations**

Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

#### **Newsletter**

Nancie Fimbel

and Don Keesey (Editors)

Clyde Lawrence (Layout/Design)

#### **Activities**

Lonna Smith

Elba Maldonado-Colon

Lucy McProud

**Archivist** — Celia Bakke

#### **CSU-ERFA Reps**

Nancie Fimbel

Chris Jochim

Joan Merdinger

#### **Program Committee**

Barbara Conry,

Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno,

Bill McCraw, Lucy McProud,

Carmen Sigler

#### **Webmasters**

Carol Christensen, Bethany Shifflett

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**Visit the SJSU ERFA Website at**  
[www.sjsu.edu/emertusfaculty](http://www.sjsu.edu/emertusfaculty)

Views and opinions expressed in this SJSU ERFA Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editors or of San Jose State University.



# Annual Business Meeting (Continued)

Association; this meeting shall be called to receive reports of officers and committees, to act on items recommended by the Executive Board and to conduct elections. Written notice of this meeting shall be given to the members at least two weeks in advance.

When an in person meeting of the Association is not possible, voting of the members on recommendations of the Executive Board and on Association officers may be facilitated by regular mail or by an electronic form of communication. When electronic technologies are used to facilitate voting by the members,

hard copy ballots must be provided for those who are not able to use electronic forms of communication.

## **Proposed Amendment to Article VI, Section 3.**

During times when in-person meetings are not possible, electronic communication technologies that provide opportunities for simultaneous aural and visual interactions between and among the members may be used to conduct meetings.

Please attend and vote.

# All Hands on Deck

**By Betty Auchard**

By the year 2000, I'd been a widow for two years, and doing "guy" jobs had become my hobby. Removing black mold from our huge deck and then staining and sealing it came up next on my list of tasks. I purchased wood cleaner and read the directions on the can: "Restore wood in three easy steps: (1) Brush it on. (2) Let it set. (3) Wash it off."

*Hey, I can do this, I thought.*

My troubles began with step one. Using a push broom, I applied the bleachy-smelling stuff on one small area at a time, doing my best to spread it evenly ... until I backed myself into a corner. I carried on after adjusting my strategy and noticed the black mold looked lighter but blotchy. Attempting to stay optimistic, I reminded myself to allow it to "set," just as step two instructed.

While I worked up a sweat, Rudy, my lawn-mower man, appeared on the scene to do the weekly grass cutting. He must have felt sorry for me, because he said, "Oh, Betty, let me help you." Thrilled to little pieces with the offer, I stepped aside.

Rudy worked best to music, so he turned on his tiny red radio and set the volume low enough to listen to a Latino station without blasting the whole neighborhood. He swabbed the surface



with the rest of the cleaner, bouncing to the rhythms of "La Bamba."

The sun must have intensified the bleaching effect on the wood, because the surface looked *much* lighter in some areas. Rudy decided to use my power washer to stop the bleaching action. I said, "Can I just hire you to finish washing the rest for me today and seal this tomorrow?"

# All Hands on Deck (Continued)

"Oh, Betty, sure. I can mow the lawn later."

Rudy got right to work and sprayed water *everywhere*, but only a little of it landed on the deck, so I planned to spray a second time as soon as he left.

Alone with the power washer, I held the nozzle a few inches from the wood, and the surface started lookin' great. It was a big job, so I hired Colin, my nineteen-year-old grandson, to spray a third time. I gave him a demonstration of my technique.

He said, "Nonnie, I think you're doing more harm than good by holding the nozzle so close to the wood." But what does a kid know? I persuaded him to do it *my* way because the result looked a lot cleaner.

Colin worked best to music too, so he tuned his black boom box to a heavy metal station and cranked up the volume so the neighbors could enjoy it. I tolerated my grandson's music because I wanted the wood clean, dry, and ready to seal as soon as Rudy arrived the next morning.

I arose early for my own personal inspection, and the wood looked so beautiful I caressed it with both hands. What a shock! Ridges covered the surface. I bent down for a closer look and realized the power washer had dug out the soft part of the grain. I stared in disbelief at the 533 square feet of wood I had paid my grandson to damage.

I had to think fast and dialed Rudy's number. When he answered, I said, "Rudy, I'll explain later, but please stop at Home Depot on your way here and rent a power sander."

Rudy sanded and sanded, but the ridges stayed put. I sent him back to the store to rent a small edge sander so we could get closer to the wall. It worked fine there, but when he used the sander to tidy up the steps, it created visible gouges in the middle of each one.

The growing disaster resulted in an out-of-body experience. I felt close to panic but acted calm.

We kept the large machine an extra day and took the entire deck down to fresh redwood. By then, the color I had sanded away needed to be put back. I stared at the mess and decided to repair the mistakes my own way, which meant making it up as I went

along. I could write a book titled *Learning it All the Hard Way*.

I drove back to the store and bought a gallon of one-step stain and sealant. My oldest son, a fine craftsman, stopped by for a quick visit that evening. When he saw my project, he said, "Mom, I hate to tell you this, but the sanding job is really bad."

I sent him home.

As soon as Rudy arrived the next day, I said, "While you spray the stain, I'll drive to the store and get more of the stuff so we won't run out."

The clerk at the store said, "I wouldn't spray today; there's too much of a breeze. You'll have oil-based stain all over the place."

I tore home, assuming Rudy didn't know any more than I did about not spraying in a breeze. By the time I reached the backyard, splatters of brown had peppered the windows, as well as his face and clothes. Specks had even landed on his big, white front teeth.

He said, "Betty, it's good you bought more stain, because I've already run out." He had used a whole gallon on a very small portion of the deck area.

I gave up on my attempt to appear calm and screamed, "Rudy, you used too much!"

Thick brown liquid had puddled on a third of the freshly sanded wood. We used squeegees to scrape the puddles into dust pans and then poured the stuff into dishpans. Stain had landed everywhere, including the cement walk and the grass. A big mess had turned into a *huge* mess.

That night I felt a cold sore coming on, which happens when I'm stressed.

Several nights later, by the light from the house and the moon, Rudy and I finished our work. It looked beautiful at last.

Rudy felt so excited about doing the job ourselves that he decided to refurbish decks as a side job. I prayed, "God, please don't let him land any clients, because I can't recommend him."

The project made a different impression on me than on Rudy. I had learned some guy jobs should be accomplished by experienced professionals and not by a widow and her lawn-mowing guy.



## **University and Academic Senate News** **\$300 Million restored to CSU budget**

Much has been happening in the Academic Senate this year. We have learned that the cut of \$300 million to the CSU budget has been restored. We also hope to be receiving additional money for deferred maintenance and important projects.

While the campus remains closed for many of the normal activities, planning is going on behind the scenes. There is a new campus master plan to implement Transformation 2030. This plan will address physical development for the main and south campuses as well as the University's off-campus properties and connections with the City of San José through 2040. To check out what is happening, go to <https://www.sjsu.edu/campusmasterplan/>.

In the Academic Senate, a Land Acknowledgement has been read at the

beginning of each meeting. The land acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the history and legacy of colonialism that has impacted our Indigenous Peoples, their traditional territories, and their practices. In particular, the land on which the SJSU campus lies was once part of the tribal lands of the Muwekma tribe. This Land Acknowledgement has now been institutionalized in the bylaws of the Academic Senate to be read at each meeting.

The Professional Standards Committee has been hard at work on policies involving RTP for Tenure/Tenure faculty including the criteria and standards for evaluating the Scholarship of Engagement. It is also working on a policy covering Lecturer Faculty including range elevation and naming criteria.